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Chavez recovery positive despite 'complications'

CARACAS (AFP) — Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez experienced "complications," including bleeding, during his cancer surgery but was showing positive signs of recovery yesterday, a senior aide said.

Communications Minister Ernesto Villegas said that, during his treatment in Cuba, Chavez had suffered "bleeding that required the adoption of corrective measures which permitted its opportune control."

It was the first time Venezuelan officials had acknowledged complications in the six hours of surgery that Chavez, 58, underwent on



Tuesday in Havana.

Chavez' aides have openly warned Venezuelans to prepare themselves for the worst as the country, already deeply divided over Chavez's populist

Meeting to actualize and optimize visas held here

ORANJESTAD -- Consultative meetings regarding visas for the Dutch Caribbean were held on Aruba between the departments of External Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs of Holland. As a result of the changes in the structure of the Dutch Kingdom in 2010, they introduced a harmonious management of visas as well as one single visa for all the Dutch Caribbean islands. Part of the management plan is to hold regular consultative meetings to monitor the processes and maintain open lines of communication.

The preliminary meetings



L.-r.:Derk Jan Nauta, Andy Lee, and Geraldine Blom - Ras

to prepare for the Visa Work Conference of the Kingdom began last March 2012. The conference self took place last June in Aruba with various Dutch Embassies, dealing with visas for the Dutch Caribbean, in attendance. Authorities from every country in the Dutch Kingdom in charge of visas were also in attendance. It was during that meeting that they actualized and optimized the Visa Handbook which outlines all the procedures to follow when a petition for a visa to the Dutch Caribbean is made.

The Director of Aruba's Department of External Affairs, drs. A. Lee and Geraldine Blom-Ras, management personnel and other management personnel, met with Derk Jan Nauta of the Min-

istry of External Affairs of the Netherlands. In this meeting they discussed a number of important matters related to the visa, political developments in the Kingdom and countries in the Kingdom, and the actual situation regarding the agreements of the Visa Work Conference of 2012. Also on their agenda was the fight against human trafficking and the cooperation in the Kingdom with respect to visas.

The Aruba Department of External Affairs also called a meeting with other partners, such as DIMAS, Immigration and the government's advisor on human traffic, to meet with Derk Jan Nauta to discuss previously mentioned topics so as to make concrete the agreements accorded.

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Reminder for artisans to submit their work to Department of Culture

Aruba Government encouraging local artisans to produce authentic handicrafts



ORANJESTAD – On November 19, Minister of Economics, Social and Cultural Affairs, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar held an informative evening with some 80 local artisans to exchange ideas.

During the meeting the minister informed the artisans the government will start labeling locally produced handicrafts "Made in ARUBA." The reason for this is to give our local artisans a distinction, make their product stand out and show the originality of native artwork.

Several have already deli-

vered their work for this service, but the agency is certain there are still more to be labeled. The Department of Culture reminds all artisans who still have to deliver their artwork to do so at said department during office hours. Just ask for Stan Dabian, who is the general coordinator of the labeling project. The last day for delivery is December 21, 2012.

In 2013 the Department of Culture will start with workshops for all local artisans and is also planning a handicrafts tradeshow.

Sunday KOFFIE MORGEN Slot Tournament \$1000,- Cash Prizes
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Aruba's Lotto celebrated the 12 Days of Christmas



Patrick Fortin of Lotto

Aruba Lotto's Marketing Manager Patrick Fortin announced beginning yesterday, December 13, four of their regular games will now offer ticket holders the chance to win twice. They are celebrating for 12 days with additional drawings awarding a total of 50,000 Aruban florins (\$28,571.)

Prizes range from movie tickets at Caribbean Cinemas, SETAR Calling Cards, gift certificates for Kooyman Home Center, Super Food Supermarket to CMB Bank gift cards in the amounts of 1,000 and 5,000 Aruban florins. With each purchase of two numbers, Lotto players will receive an additional ticket for these games: Tic Tac Toe, Lotto di Dia, Lotta 5 or Mini Mega. The Lotto Center on Paardenbaaistraat offers tickets on eight different games, but these four will double chances of winning during the twelve days until Christmas Eve.

For the first five days, purchased tickets will announce if they are an instant winner. Winning tickets will be eligible for the final raffle and big prizes. The final six days, there will be a drawing every night at 9:00 PM broadcast on Telearuba, Channel 13. Ticket holders will find an

additional number on the bottom of their ticket, aside from those they selected, and from the tickets issued a winner will be drawn. One must purchase two of the above named games to receive a qualifying ticket for the drawings.

Prizes awarded over the 12 Days of Christmas are:

1. 12 Caribbean Cinema tickets
2. Valero Gasoline Bon of Afl. 25,-
3. Setar Prepaid Card of Afl. 35,-
4. Flora Gift Card of Afl. 60,-
5. Super Food Gift Card of Afl. 65,-
6. Scorpion Firework Package worth Afl. 75,-
7. Kooyman Gift Card of Afl. 85,-
8. Pagara worth Afl. 125,-



Christmas campaign from Lotto

- 9 Super Food Gift Card of Afl. 125,-
- 10 Setar Blackberry Curve 9320 worth Afl. 480,-
- 11 CMB Money Card of Afl. 1000,-
- 12 CMB Money Card of Afl. 5000,-

Those winning fireworks can redeem their tickets and collect their prizes at the Lotto office on Friday, December 28 from 11AM to 10PM or at Friomax. Full contest rules and conditions can be found on the Lotto Aruba website: <http://www.lottoaruba.com>.

Rosalie Klein



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Cas di Glas 2012 begins



Minister Hooyboer with DJ's, President of Foundation, and Gino Goeloe

Palm Beach Plaza mall was overrun with santas of every size on Wednesday afternoon, December 12, for the Flora Market Santa fundraising walk, which inaugurated the five

days of Cas di Glas 2012. This marathon fundraising effort, House of Glass, was first staged successfully in 2010. This time, the island foundation which will benefit is the White-Yellow Cross Aruba, which provides a wellness network for infants and children, home nursing care for sick and injured members, and the elderly. The funds raised over the four days of the Cas di Glas marathon are earmarked for new equipment for elderly with chronic ailments and special needs, as well as a dedicated care center.

Aruba's Minister of Eco-



The Minister locks in the DJ's

nomic & Social Affairs and Culture was welcomed by the foundation's President Peter Balliere. She had the honor of locking up the three local radio celebrities that stationed in the Cas di Glas for four days, broadcasting steadily and accepting donations. The noted media personalities donating their time are: Jennifer Vargas of Radio Caliente, Suhail Reyes from Power FM, and Cas di Glas veteran from two years past, DJ 101 of Cool FM.



Santas ready to walk for a worthy cause

The deejays will try and generate as many contributions as possible over their tenure in the habitat.

The Palm Beach Plaza parking lot has been set up with a stage and their will be exciting entertainment nightly during the event. The opening started with a welcome song by Jasper Taconis, a noted singer and former star of the Zissles review, returned from Holland just for the Cas di Glas 2012. Other performing groups will be Datapanik, Junior Tecla, Caroline Dijkhuizen, Freel Bartels, Levi

Silvanie, Biggie Boy, Hot Ones Band, Manuela van Geenhoven and more. Updates on events are posted on the website: <http://www.casdiglas.com>

For the duration of Cas di Glas a most unusual dining opportunity will be offered. A restaurant in the sky! Dinner will be served to a select group of guests seated 6 meters above the ground. Cocktail or tea parties in the sky are also possible. Reservations should be made at Taste of Belgium Restaurant.

Rosalie Klein

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The shop will also feature special shopping hours for those who work until late, offering them the opportunity to still buy a gift at a more flexible and relaxed time.

Holiday hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Thursday, Friday and Saturday from

12 noon to 8:00 p.m., and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

World of Feng Shui and Magic Candles is where gift seekers will find beautiful arrangements and locally made candles! They also have a great variety of holiday candles and customizable arrangements that will fill your home or office with a delightful fragrance associated with the holidays.

World of Feng Shui and Magic Candles wishes everyone a Merry Christmas filled with joy with their loved ones and a Happy New Year full of energy and positive attitude.

Tommy Hilfiger employees feted by management for their exemplary work performance



During their Christmas Dinner at Texas De Brazil on Dec 8, Tommy Hilfiger General Manager Niki Shetty honored the establishment's employees who had long and dedicated years of service and the best employees of the year.

A surprise visit of the company Director Mr. Jack Attie added flavor to this evening and he congratulated every one for their hard work and maintaining the good image of Tommy Hilfiger in Aruba.



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Shopping Night: December 15th & 22nd Le Fragrance and More: Where you can get all you need!



Le Fragrance & More, has recently opened at the Sun Plaza Mall, L.G. Smith Blvd. 160, Suite 115.

It is a shop of PARFUMES, world famous brands and fragrances, cosmetics such as foundations, blushes, eyeliners, eyepencils, nail polish etc...

Toiletries such as sunlotion, body lotion, body fragrances, sunglasses, electronics, photographic items, gift sets, bathing suits, bikinis and accessories.

Le Fragrance & More is also a druggist's shop for all your last minute needs such as Panadol, Immodium, Dica, Night Quill etc...

Le Fragrance is open from Monday thru Saturday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

For this Holiday Season we have Christmas discounts, gifts, and baskets.

Shopping Night is on Saturday Dec. 15th and Saturday Dec. 22nd till 9 p.m.

Happy Holidays.

Dr. Daryanani outpatient surgery closed today and Monday

ORANJESTAD -- Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital announces that the outpatient surgery of Dr. Daryanani is moving to its former location, the Caya J.E.M. Arends #17. Due to this, the clinic will be closed today, Friday, December 14 and Monday, December 17. On Tuesday, December 18, the outpatient surgery is again open to the public.

The telephone and fax numbers will remain the same, 527-4225 and 582-6799 respectively.

With this move, Dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital feels they will provide patients with a more efficient service in a comfortable environment.



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Less red tape and more benefits for starting a local business

ORANJESTAD -- The government of Aruba has been actively working towards improving the process for establishing a business on the island. Many changes and adaptations have resulted in much less red tape, and a much easier and less expensive process, and much more efficient. In addition to the many positive changes, the government has also introduced training programs and workshops to assist entrepreneurs and to make them more successful.

IDEA: Initiative for the Development of Aruban Businesses

The Ministry of Economics, with a particular view on small and medium size businesses came up with the establishment of an organization to strengthen these businesses, the IDEA Bureau.

This bureau offers extensive guidance and support as well as advice regarding credit, technology, marketing and regulations.

All services offered by IDEA are free of charge in an effort to help struggling entrepreneurs to get up and running. The office also offers training sessions and workshops as well as specific business courses to help with the management of different aspects of a business.

Less Red Tape and more benefits

The government has emphasized the need for an attractive climate for investments for existing and new businesses. Most of the red tape has been eliminated, making the process so much less cumbersome.

Most of the tariffs for establishing a business have

been drastically reduced. Several documents that were rather unnecessary have been eliminated in the licensing process and the time it took to get a business up and running has also been reduced. In the past it could have taken anywhere from six months to a year, today the process can be completed in under eight weeks! The goal is to have the department fully automated so that all petitions and permits can be issued in a maximum of two weeks.

Other benefits for the businessman today are the reduction in the utility tariffs and the reduction of import duties on certain energy efficient products. They have also re-introduced the investment deduction of 6% in 2011/2012.

Businesses have also been granted the permission to operate more flexible hours

and remain open later to accommodate, for example, the cruise ships that may call during the later hours of the day.

For those interested in obtaining financing, and who submits a petition for financing, the government is subsidizing a program at the AIB known as Small Medium Enterprise. AIB will provide guidance with a well designed business plan and will even assist an entrepreneur with attracting investment for his future business venture.

At the recent 2012 Small Business Week conference the government announced that the next step is to introduce Micro Financing as well as a Guarantee Fund for businesses who need access to medium size capital. This is a good time to make good use of these benefits and opportunities for starting your own business on Aruba.



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International news

China,S.Africa suspend Brazil beef imports over madcow

BRASILIA (AFP) - China and South Africa have joined Japan in suspending imports of Brazilian beef meat over an atypical case of mad cow disease, an official source said yesterday.

"We received official notification from China and South Africa announcing the decision," said an official from the agriculture ministry who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The ministry earlier this week said the case was detected in an animal that died in 2010 in the southern state of Parana and posed "no risk whatsoever to public health or to animal hygiene."

The ministry official said Brasilia, as it did with Japan earlier this week, contacted China and South Africa to set the record straight over the atypical case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

In its statement issued

Tuesday, the ministry said: "Brazil does not have cases of BSE" and noted that it launched a "preventive action" to preempt similar measures by key importers.

"We are in touch with countries to reaffirm that the atypical case of the disease carries no risk for exports," the ministry said then.

Authorities also said the World Organization for Animal Health had been notified of the case and in response indicated it was "maintaining Brazil's status as a country with an insignificant risk of BSE, the best existing risk classification."

With nearly 200 million head of cattle, Brazil is a leading beef exporter.

From January to October, it exported one million tons of beef, mainly to Russia, the ministry said

McAfee says he's broke after fleeing Belize

MIAMI (AFP) - Anti-virus software pioneer John McAfee said yesterday he is flat broke after leaving behind what remains of his fortune in Belize, where he is wanted for questioning over his neighbor's murder.

McAfee and 20-year-old girlfriend Sam Vanegas spent more than three weeks on the run in Belize after Gregory Faull's November 11 murder before slipping across the border into Guatemala, where he

was arrested on December 5.

In the latest sudden twist to the McAfee drama, Guatemala on Wednesday abandoned efforts to return him to Belize and expelled him immediately to his country of origin, the United States.

"I have nothing now," McAfee, a free man for now, said, claiming to have left all his worldly possessions in Belize, including, he said, some \$20 million in investments and about 15 properties.

Russia says rebels may win, jihadists claim Damascus bomb

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Moscow acknowledged yesterday that the Syrian regime, its longtime ally, might lose its battle with Arab- and Western-backed rebels, 21 months into a conflict that has cost tens of thousands of lives.

The Russian comments came a day after Syria's interior minister was lightly wounded in a bold Damascus attack and claims, denied by the government, that an increasingly desperate regime had begun

using Scud missiles against its foes.

Jihadists who have been at the forefront of latest rebel advances claimed the deadly Wednesday attack on the interior ministry.

And car bomb attacks yesterday at an army residential block southwest of Damascus killed 24 people, state media said, further highlighting the regime's vulnerability even around the capital.

Deputy Foreign Minister

Mikhail Bogdanov said Arab and Western recognition of the opposition as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people had emboldened rebels to press their military campaign rather than seek the negotiated solution championed by Moscow.

"They (the rebels) are saying that victory is not far away, 'let's take Aleppo, let's take Damascus,'" the RIA Novosti news agency quoted him as saying.

Rice withdraws US secretary of state bid

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Susan Rice yesterday withdrew her name from consideration to be the next secretary of state, after becoming a lightning rod for the White House's handling of the raid on the US consulate in Benghazi.

Rice, currently the US envoy to the United Nations, is close to President Barack Obama and emerged as the top target of Republican attacks on the administration's handling of the attack on September 11.

"If nominated, I am now convinced that the confirmation process would be lengthy, disruptive and costly, to you and to our most pressing national and international priori-

ties," Rice said in a letter to Obama.

"That trade-off is simply not worth it to our country... therefore, I respectfully request that you no longer consider my candidacy at this time," Rice wrote, in the letter seen by AFP.

Obama accepted Rice's decision, first reported by NBC, in a telephone call with the UN envoy yesterday and issued a statement condemning the "unfair and misleading attacks" on her.

"Her decision demonstrates the strength of her character, and an admirable commitment to rise above the politics of the moment to put our national in-

terests first," Obama said.

"The American people can be proud to have a public servant of her caliber and character representing our country," Obama added, saying that Rice would remain as UN ambassador with a place in his cabinet.

Rice's move throws the race to succeed Hillary Clinton, who has said she will not serve in Obama's second term, wide open.

Democratic Senator John Kerry will now be seen as the hot favorite for the post, though officials say no announcements on Obama's second term national security team are imminent.



A Syrian man points at a crater where a Scud missile hit in the town of Nasiriyeh on the highway between Damascus and the central Syrian city of Homs on December 13, 2012. A former Syrian officer who served in a battalion specialising in surface-to-surface missiles told AFP that regime forces had fired Scuds three days ago, but the government has denied this. (AFP PHOTO)

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International News

Kirchner pushes change in Argentina sex trafficking law

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) - Argentina's President Cristina Kirchner Thursday will convene special sessions of Congress next week to reform sex trafficking laws after a court acquitted 13 people accused of running a sex slavery ring.

Public outrage over the verdict led to clashes between angry demonstrators and police, and protests were held in at least seven provinces Wednesday, including Tucuman, where the sex trafficking case was being heard.

Kirchner will hold the special sessions to close loopholes in a 2008 law on human trafficking, which puts the burden of proof on adult women victims of sex trafficking to prove that they did not consent to being sex slaves.

It would also increase the jail terms for those convicted of human trafficking, and would order that assets seized

in such cases be transferred to a fund for victims.

The Tucuman case centered on the abduction and disappearance of a young woman, Marita Veron, who vanished in 2002 at age 23.

Her mother, Susana Trimarco, launched a crusade against the trafficking in young women as she searched for her daughter, which led to passage of the 2008 law. But Trimarco has yet to find the woman.

After Tuesday's acquittal, Trimarco said she received a call from Kirchner, "and she was shouting 'I cannot believe it. I cannot believe it'."

"Even the wife of President (Barack) Obama voiced her support to me. I thank her from the bottom of my heart and assured her that we are not going to stop fighting," she added, referring to US First Lady Michelle Obama.



QIANTUN (AFP) : Farmer Liu Qiyuan poses among survival pods that he built and has also dubbed 'Noah's Arc', in a yard at his home in the village of Qiantun south of Beijing. Inspired by the apocalyptic Hollywood movie '2012' and the 2004 Asian tsunami, Liu hopes that his creations consisting of a fibreglass shell around a steel frame will be adopted by government departments and international organisations for use in the event of tsunamis and earthquakes. Liu has built seven pods which are able to float on water, some of which have their own propulsion. The airtight spheres with varying interiors contain oxygen tanks and seatbelts with space for around 14 people, and are designed to remain upright when in water.

Amsterdam to ban joints in schools

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Amsterdam's mayor Eberhard van der Laan is to formally ban cannabis smoking at all schools, the first city in the soft-drug tolerant Netherlands to do so, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

Although cannabis remains technically illegal and hard drugs are strictly forbidden in the Netherlands, the country decriminalised possession of less than five grammes (around an ounce) of weed in 1976.

Most of Amsterdam's schools already had their own 'house rules' against dope smoking, Reshef acknowledged.

The formal ban simply

meant teachers would be able to call the police in cases where pupils refused to comply, she added.

Although the practice has already been implemented elsewhere in the country, "Amsterdam is the first to do it across the board," she added.

In a letter to the city council on Monday, Van der Laan also made it clear the official ban was to "support schools which already have taken their own measures" to stop the practice.

In his letter, he said he was also looking at banning joint-smoking in playgrounds. And he wanted to ensure that some 44 so-called cannabis cafes closer than 250 metres (820 feet) from schools were closed

by January 2014.

The government announced last month it was ditching plans for a controversial "weed-pass" law. While it was aimed at banning foreigners from coffee shops, it would also have obliged local smokers to show identification and register in a local database.

Van der Laan had opposed that proposal.

Instead, his letter supported a new initiative that would allow Dutch cities themselves to decide whether to bar foreign drug tourists.

"Adult tourists remain welcome at the city's coffee shops," the mayor said.

Amsterdam itself has 220 coffee shops.

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EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

'Worrying' increase in global child trafficking: UN



VIENNA (AFP) - Children - most of them girls -- now make up 27 percent of all human trafficking cases, marking an alarming increase in recent years, a UN agency said Wednesday.

Girls under 18 made up two thirds of all trafficked children and now constitute 15-20 per cent of the total number of all detected victims, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said in its annual report.

The study was based on of-

ficial data supplied by 132 countries from 2007-2010.

The majority of trafficked persons are women, accounting for 55 to 60 per cent of victims detected globally. However, the total proportion of women and girls together soars to about 75 per cent, according to the UNODC.

"Human trafficking requires a forceful response founded on the assistance and protection for victims, rigorous enforcement by the criminal justice system, a sound

migration policy and firm regulation of the labour markets," said UNODC director Yury Fedotov in a statement.

Within the overall statistics, the study found significant regional variations.

The share of detected child victims is 68 per cent in Africa and the Middle East, and 39 per cent in South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific. The proportion drops to 27 per cent in the Americas and 16 per cent in Europe and Central Asia, according to the study.

Fedotov acknowledged gaps in knowledge about human trafficking and stressed the need for "comprehensive data about offenders, victims and trafficking flows."

Still, the number of trafficking victims is estimated to run into the millions.

The report also raises concerns about low conviction rates -- 16 per cent of reporting countries did not record a

single conviction for trafficking in persons between 2007 and 2010.

On a more positive note,

154 countries have ratified the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, which the UNODC oversees.

People live longer but are not always healthier

PARIS (AFP) - People live more than a decade longer on average today than they did in 1970, but spend much of these boon years battling diseases like cancer, according to a global health review published Thursday.

By 2010, a man's life expectancy at birth had risen 11.1 years from 1970 and that of a woman 12.1 years, said the bundle of seven studies published by The Lancet medical journal.

But as we live longer, bigger chunks of our lives are marred by illness, with non-infectious maladies like cancer and heart disease claiming ever more victims.

The study said non-com-

municable diseases like cancer, diabetes and heart disease accounted for nearly two out of every three deaths in 2010 - up from half in 1990.

Thirty-eight percent more people died of cancer in 2010 than in 1990 -- eight million compared to 5.8 million.

"Health is about more than avoiding death," said Alan Lopez and Theo Vos of the University of Queensland's School of Population Health in a joint statement.

With the exception of sub-Saharan Africa, it shows a clear shift in the disease burdens from traditional culprits like malnutrition, infectious diseases and birth complications that generally mow down younger people, to cancer, heart disease and diabetes that can linger for years.

Globally, though, the study showed deaths in children younger than five dropping by almost 60 percent from 16.4 million deaths in 1970 to 6.8 million in 2010.

Japanese women had the world's highest life expectancy at 85.9 years, followed by Icelandic men at 80 years.

The impoverished island of Haiti had the lowest life expectancy (32.5 years for men and 43.6 for women), mainly due to the devastating 2010 earthquake that killed at least 250,000 people.

An unhealthy diet and physical inactivity were collectively responsible for an estimated 12.5 million deaths.

The study noted a sharp rise in chronic disability from causes like mental disorders, substance abuse, diabetes and muscular-skeletal ailments.

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Sci-Tech

Wikipedia sees future -- and threat -- in cell phones



NEW YORK (AFP) - Cell phones could be Wikipedia's path to global domination, but may also pose a risk to the crowdsourcing culture the on-line encyclopedia relies on, chief executive Sue Gardner says.

On one hand, says Gardner, who is also executive director of the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation, cell phones are by far the best way to reach vast new audiences in the developing southern hemisphere where people rely heavily on handheld devices, rather than desktops or laptops.

Right now, "Wikipedia is most popular and most effective in richer countries, because they have fast band, good Internet penetration and people own lots of devices," she told AFP in New York. "In developing countries, people are going straight to the Inter-

net only with mobile phones."

To make Wikipedia take root in Latin America and Arabic-speaking countries, for example, the huge organization wants cell phone companies to offer access without charge.

"Data charges are a big barrier to Internet use in poor countries," Gardner said, adding that a streamlined, text version of the encyclopedia will be built to reduce those phone charges and speed downloads.

Ironically, though, the rise of the smart phone and incremental retreat of larger computers could threaten the lifeblood of Wikipedia, which is the crowd-based, volunteer collaboration between readers in creating content.

People may constantly demand more information at their fingertips, but the question ultimately may be: who

takes the time to provide it if they're glued to their smart phone?

"I think a lot about the shift to mobile devices from laptops and desk tops. It looks that the Internet is taking turn towards people using devices for consuming content more than creating it," Gardner said.

Greenpeace welcomes Levi's pledge on chemicals ban

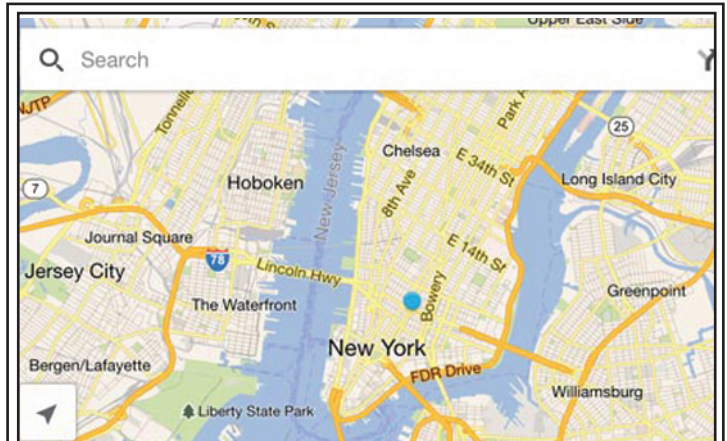
PARIS (AFP) - Iconic US jeans maker Levi Strauss has committed to eliminating all hazardous chemicals from its supply chain by 2020, Greenpeace said Thursday, claiming a triumph for its global Detox campaign.

To this end, the giant manufacturer said 15 of its biggest suppliers, most of them in China and Mexico, would make a public disclosure by June 2013 of hazardous chemicals used, followed by another 25 suppliers by the end of the year.

Earlier this month, Greenpeace said two Mexican factories that supply clothing for fashion brands including Levi Strauss & Co, were dumping toxic chemicals.

Greenpeace launched its Detox campaign in 2011 to put pressure on big clothing brands to stop using textiles treated with chemicals that can be dangerous to health.

It urged other brands to follow Levi example.



SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Google Maps returned to the iPhone Thursday, allowing users to replace a glitch-ridden Apple program panned for omitting key landmarks and sending people in wrong directions. The maps disaster marred the image of a company which seemed to have the Midas touch for hugely successful new products like the iPhone and iPad.



MONACO (AFP): The sailing boat "Pangaea", with on board South African explorer Mike Horn and young explorers, arrives at the Monaco port after a four-year eco adventure around the world on December 13, 2012. Under the motto "explore - learn - act", the Pangaea Expedition is a global environmental project whose intent is to encourage young people to make an active contribution to protecting the environment and conserving natural resources.



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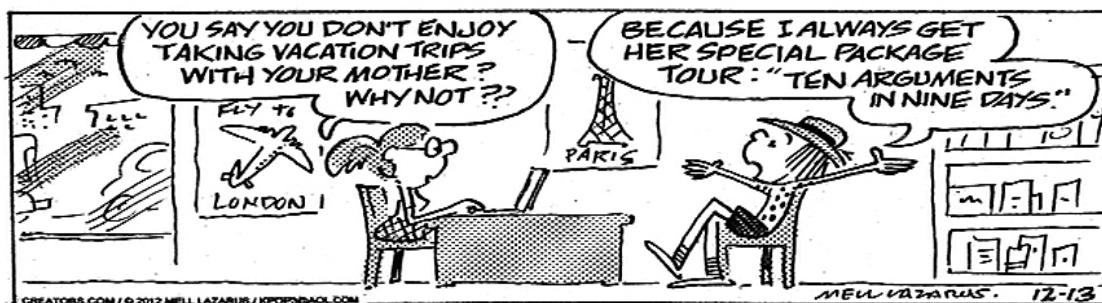
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COMING & GOING

ACROSS

1. Emcee Parks
5. Port of Rome
10. "Mod Squad" hair style
14. Diva's delight
15. Drizzly
16. Attraction
17. Board game
19. Assumed character
20. Response seeker
21. ___ off (caused to retire)
23. "The Bridge of San Luis ___"
24. Many Monets
26. Set ablaze
27. Subdued
28. Rendezvous
32. Fix boundaries
35. Proposal request
36. One of

Dumbo's "wings"

37. Goes wrong
38. ___ common denominator
40. Mlle. la Douce
41. Comic Philips
42. Pindaric works
43. Gargled
45. Hooper Sims
47. Dispatched
48. Three, to Luigi
49. French companies: abbr.
50. Letters in genetics
53. Sportswear pieces
57. George or T.S.
59. Dutch cheese
60. Tailor's technique
62. Latvia's

capital

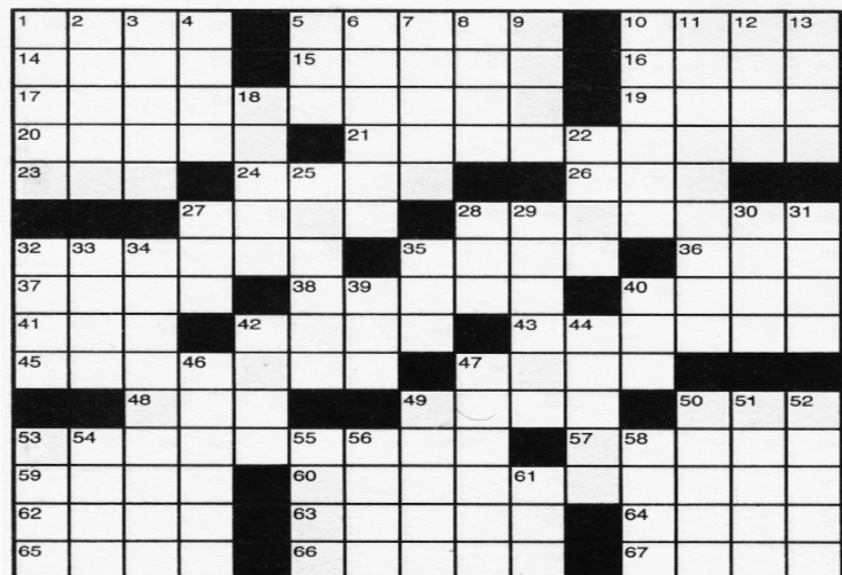
63. Lake Indians
64. Repetition of sound
65. Props for Tiger Woods
66. Road payments
67. "___ Just My Style" (1966 song)

DOWN

1. Queen Celeste's husband
2. Clean, as a blackboard
3. Desi, on TV
4. Accept
5. Hour: Ital.
6. Taste
7. Eras
8. Part of the plot
9. Author Rand

et al.

10. Nimble
11. Space and the Wild West, e.g.
12. Rattling sound
13. Had creditors
18. Pained sound
22. "___ Three Lives"
25. Well-shod Marcos
27. Poet's contraction
28. Bell and Kettle
29. Main dish
30. Appellative
31. Reunion invitee, for short
32. Pretty pitiful grades
33. Humorous author Bombeck
34. Newsworthy
35. Snorts of laughter
39. Poet's dusk
40. Money made on money: abbr.
42. Hebrew dry measure
44. Skirt panel
46. Plays
47. Ebert's former partner
49. Beany's buddy
50. Moat
51. Spanish night
52. Dumas dueler
53. Spanish muralist
54. Adams of cigar-selling
55. Be an ally
56. Pacific Islands staple
58. Fibs
61. Draft agcy.



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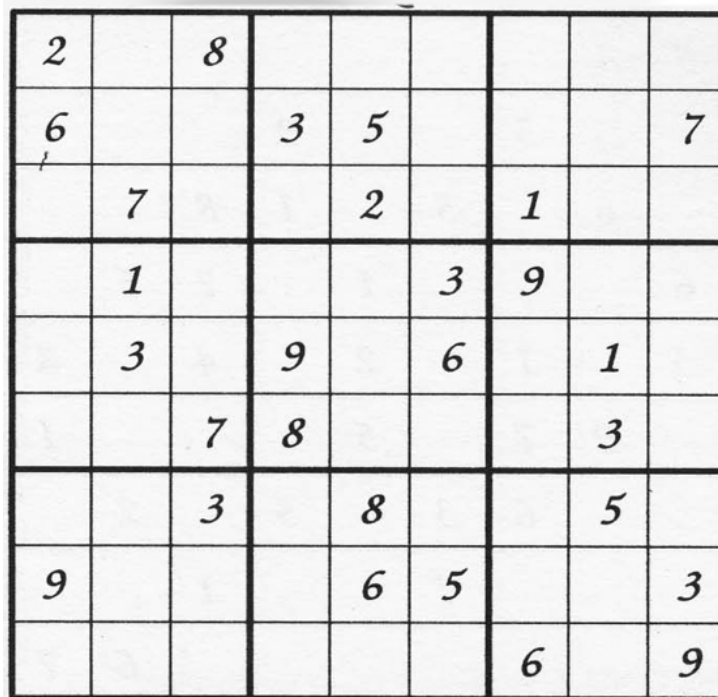
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5	4	8	5	9	1	7	2	6
1	5	7	6	8	2	9	4	3
9	5	2	1	8	4	6	7	3
8	1	4	9	7	6	2	5	3
2	7	6	5	4	9	1	8	3
5	8	1	7	2	9	6	4	3
4	6	2	8	5	1	7	9	3
7	9	5	1	6	4	8	3	2

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Finance



Current as of:
12/13/2012

	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.83
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	2.92
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	194.01
Netherlands	EUR	230.59	232.69	235.25
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	27.25
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	31.77
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	32.32
Japan	JPY	214.88	216.84	215.47

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Oil prices fall on cliff fears, US stocks sink



NEW YORK (AFP) - Oil prices eased Thursday as the market fretted about the US fiscal cliff crisis that threatens to throw the world's biggest crude oil consumer back into recession.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for January delivery, shed 88 cents from Wednesday to settle at \$85.89 a barrel.

In London trade, Brent North Sea crude for January dropped \$1.59 to close at \$107.91.

With just 18 days left before the January 1 kick-off of drastic US tax increases and spending cuts known as the fiscal cliff, President Barack Obama and Republican lawmakers remained at odds over a compromise to avoid the cliff.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer



Romania probes 85-million-euro bank fraud

BUCHAREST (AFP) - Two banks operating in Romania have been hit by an 85-million-euro fraud carried out by a criminal group that took out a string of illegal corporate loans its members never repaid, prosecutors said Thursday.

Austrian bank Volksbank and French-Romanian bank BRD confirmed they had been hit by the scheme.

Prosecutors said investigators had carried out 50 searches Thursday in connection with the case.

"The accused made substantial financial gains by illegally obtaining loans from two banks for 35 companies controlled by members of this network of criminals," said the prosecution's organised crime unit in a statement.

Seven bank directors helped the companies obtain loans they did not qualify for, while notaries who were involved in the scheme provided overvalued estimates of the property offered as collateral, the statement said.

Volksbank, which said it had alerted authorities to the fraud in May 2010, estimated its losses at eight million euros.

BRD did not say how much it had lost in the scheme.

The prosecution's organised crime unit cracked a similar case in November that involved high-level Romanian civil servants and the deputy director of BRD, a subsidiary of French bank Societe Generale. The bank lost 22 million euros in that case.



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S&P puts Britain's AAA rating on negative outlook

LONDON (AFP) - Standard and Poor's cut the outlook on Britain's AAA credit rating from stable to negative on Thursday, raising the possibility that it could downgrade the rating in the next two years.

"The negative outlook reflects our view of a one-in-three chance that we could lower the ratings in the next two years if the UK's economic and fiscal performances weaken beyond our current expectations," S&P said in a statement.

They followed the other two main ratings agencies in putting Britain's credit rating on a negative outlook.

"We now expect the United Kingdom's net general government debt as a percentage of GDP to continue to rise in 2015, before declining again," S&P said.

"We are affirming our 'AAA/A-1+' long- and short-term unsolicited sovereign credit ratings on the UK," it added.

Fellow rating agency Moody's changed its outlook on Britain's Aaa rating to negative in February when it downgraded the ratings and outlooks of several eurozone countries.

Meanwhile, Fitch reaffirmed its AAA rating for Britain at the end of September, but put it on negative outlook, warning that weak economic growth and a rising debt level was increasing the likelihood of a downgrade.

However Fitch warned earlier this month that the government pushing back by a year its official target for reducing public debt as a proportion of economic output to 2015-16 damaged the "credibility" of Britain's cherished AAA rating.

A spokeswoman for the Treasury, or finance ministry, insisted that Britain's economy was "on the right track" and was making progress in cutting the budget deficit.

When it came to power in 2010, Prime Minister David Cameron's coalition government introduced a package of deep cuts in public spending in a bid to slash the deficit.

The Treasury highlighted the fact that Standard and Poor's "endorse the government's 'strong commitment to implementing the fiscal mandate' and that the ratings agency 'warn against slowing 'the pace and extent of fiscal consolidation'."



MADRID (AFP) : Demonstrators take part in a protest against government's austerity reforms and cuts in Madrid on December 13, 2012. Public spending on education has been cut by more than a billion euros this year compared with 2011, and public schools employed nearly 3,000 fewer teachers during the 2011-12 academic year, according to the education ministry.

Jackie Chan criticism sparks Hong Kong fight-back

Hong Kong, Dec 13, 2012 (AFP) - Action hero Jackie Chan provoked a furious fight-back from Hong Kongers Thursday after reportedly suggesting in a Chinese magazine interview that protest in his native city should be restricted.

The comments from the Hong Kong-born star unleashed a wave of criticism in the southern Chinese city, which prides itself on the upholding of civil liberties including the right to protest.

"Hong Kong has become a city of protest. The whole world used to say it was South Korea. It is now Hong Kong," the South China Morning Post quoted Chan as saying in an interview with Guangzhou-based Southern People Weekly magazine published Tuesday.

The Rush Hour star, known for his martial arts skills and daring stunt work, faced a counter-attack from Hong Kong politicians and academics, who said he was ignorant of the value of freedom cherished by the city's seven million people.

The former British colony, which was returned to Chinese rule in 1997, maintains a semi-autonomous status with its own legal system and civil liberties not seen on the mainland, including the right to protest and free speech.

Political analyst Dixon Sing Ming from the University of

Science and Technology told the Post the comments showed Chan was "almost detached from the daily lives of the people of Hong Kong".

Calls by AFP to Chan's charitable foundation went unanswered Thursday.

Chan was slammed in 2009 after he told a government and business leaders meeting in China that Chinese people "need to be controlled" and the country should be wary of allowing too many freedoms.

He reportedly said later that his comment was taken out of context.

'Lincoln' leads Globe nominations

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Steven Spielberg's presidential drama "Lincoln" topped the Golden Globes nominations Thursday with nods in seven categories, followed by "Argo" and "Django Unchained" with five each.

Best actor nominees are Daniel Day-Lewis as Abraham Lincoln, Denzel Washington for piloting "Flight," Richard Gere for "Arbitrage," John Hawkes for "The Sessions" and Joaquin Phoenix for "The Master."

As expected Jessica Chastain is shortlisted for her CIA agent role in "Zero Dark Thirty," up against Britain's Helen Mirren for "Hitchcock," France's Marion Cotillard for "Rust and Bone," Naomi Watts for Indian Ocean tsunami drama "The Impossible" and Rachel Weisz for "The Deep Blue Sea."

The Golden Globes, organized by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), will be held on January 13 in Beverly Hills. The Oscars, the climax of Hollywood's annual awards season, will be held on February 24.



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Rock stars shine at Hurricane Sandy benefit gig

NEW YORK (AFP) - Rock music royalty, including the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, Pink Floyd's Roger Waters and Paul McCartney, joined in a stellar line-up Wednesday to raise money for victims of superstorm Sandy.

The "12-12-12" concert at Madison Square Garden brought a Who's Who of rockers under one roof for the event, which was broadcast live across 37 US television networks and a multitude of Internet livestream sites, as well as radio. Organizers expected two billion people to tune in worldwide.

Musicians also included The Who, Jon Bon Jovi, Eric Clapton, Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters, Billy Joel, Alicia Keys, Chris Martin, and rapper Kanye West, who lit up the Twittersphere by performing in a black leather skirt.

While music stars strutted their stuff, movie and TV performers including Leonardo DiCaprio, Chris Rock, Susan Sarandon, Whoopi Goldberg, and political humorist Jon Stewart fronted a telethon drive or appeared in the arena to appeal for funds in the event organized by the Robin Hood Foundation.

The phone bank was literally wall-to-wall with celebrities, among them Chelsea Clinton, the increasingly high-profile only child of former



president Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Mega-stars with New York and New Jersey roots said the October 29 hurricane-strength storm, which killed about 120 people in the United States, had humbled them.

"I've never seen anything remotely close to what Hurricane Sandy was," Bon Jovi said before being joined on stage by fellow New Jersey star Springsteen. "This storm lasted a day. The effects of it are going to last a lifetime."

Demand for seats quickly turned tickets into gold dust. The StubHub site listed one ticket at \$10,400, and before the first note played, tickets and other sales had raised \$32 million for the fund-raising drive.

At the end of the night, Robin Hood director David

Saltzman said "tens of thousands" of people had made donations, adding that the money would be "distributed in a matter of days, weeks, months -- not years."

Even now, tens of thousands of people remain without electricity, hot water or heating in the New York area.

Many people in the hardest-hit beach communities have lost their entire homes, just as the winter cold sets in.

The White House has asked Congress to send \$60.4 billion to aid rebuilding efforts, but the money has yet to be approved. The governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have estimated damages as high as \$82 billion.

The storm killed 120 people in the United States after carving a deadly path through the Caribbean.

5 Burgers Aruba: Now your best breakfast bargain!



--A favorite stop for a great burger for lunch or dinner has just expanded their hours and menu to offer some of the best breakfast bargains to be found in Palm Beach. Owners Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. The couple's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu from an inter-

nationally known franchise with a "5", which now includes breakfast.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," believes Aaron. Upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy,

made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

However, beginning at 7 a.m., patrons can now order 2 eggs any style, (omelets with 3 fillings are \$7.99) toast and coffee with unlimited refills for the special introductory price of only \$4.49, (\$5.48, with bacon) or All-you-can-eat pancakes, for \$6.99, again, with free refills on fresh coffee. Breakfast is served until 11 a.m. Famous for their fries made from fresh potatoes, Aaron has been working for months on devising the most irresistible home fries recipe, chunky and tender with skins still on; after much testing and tasting, he got the thumbs up from his harshest critic, Rosie; so this is another treat you have to try.

A glance at their burger menu will certainly tempt you to return for lunch or dinner, to sample their famous specialty items such as the Gouda,



Farmer's or Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with Aarons' secret-recipe crispy onion rings. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jala-peño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato...whatever, the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of

fries is enough to be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!"

Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

5 Burgers is now open early until 10-ish at night; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district at now extra cost for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for either owner to sit and chat, sharing their knowledge of the island while making sure patrons are happy with their meal.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

-- Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by



the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community

of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facili-

ties such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the

least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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SPORTS

Football: Drogba still a Juve target - reports



MILAN (AFP) - Juventus are still hoping to lure Didier Drogba to the club with an 18-month deal, according to speculation in the Italian press.

Drogba signed a two-and-a-half-year deal with Shanghai Shenhua in July but that has not stopped Italy's sports press from repeatedly talking up the Ivorian striker's departure from China in favour of Serie A.

Few Italian clubs speak candidly about potential transfer targets, and while Gazzetta dello Sport cited no official sources their report claimed Juventus had offered Drogba an 18-month deal that would begin in January and end in June 2014.

It underlined previous reports claiming the Ivorian was unhappy after a turbulent start to his career in the Chinese top flight where, despite his goals, Shanghai have largely flattered to deceive.

The report claimed Drogba had turned down Juventus's offer because he would prefer

the contract to run until June 2015.

There were other stipulations that could hamper the deal, according to Gazzetta.

It said Drogba, who moved to Chelsea in 2004 and eventually led the English club to Champions League triumph last season, would expect to be released for the Africa Cup of Nations, which is held January 19-February 10.

Potentially, that could be a problem for Juventus, who will be involved in the last 16 of the Champions League on February 12 and 20.

Drogba also appeared to commit to the Chinese side in a recent interview.

Speculation linking Juve with Fernando Llorente, meanwhile, continues despite the striker, who can leave Athletic Bilbao on a free transfer at the end of the season, saying on Wednesday he would prefer to move to England's Premier League.

Incidents mar South America Cup final in Sao Paulo



SAO PAULO (AFP) - Dressing room brawl, local police accused of brutality, the South America Cup final here between Sao Paulo and Argentine side Tigre was marred by serious incidents less than two years before Brazil hosts the World Cup.

Tigre refused to emerge for the second half in the second leg tie against Sao Paulo late Wednesday with the game abandoned and the title awarded to the Brazilian team.

Tigre defender Lucas Orban said police barged into their dressing room and threatened one of the club's players with a gun.

"Sao Paulo's security agents came in, they hit us with batons, took out a revolver and pointed it at the goalkeeper Damian Albil. Then the police came in and began to hit us again," he reported.

The astonishing claims came just two weeks after the draw was held here for the 2013 Confederations Cup and in the country that is hosting the 2014 World Cup.

Tigre midfielder Martin

Galmarini reported that "everyone was armed".

He said Sao Paulo's security agents were lying in wait for the Tigre players at the entrance to their dressing room "and threatened us with weapons".

The Tigre players' claims were denied by a Brazilian military policeman.

wounded on both sides."

He said his men intervened to end the melee.

Commenting on the incidents on his Twitter page Thursday, former Brazil star Ronaldo slammed the behavior of the Tigre side, saying they should be banned from continental competitions for 10 years by the South American football Confederation Conmebol.

Ronaldo, who won the World Cup with Brazil in 2002, also criticized the Sao Paulo managers and substitute players as well as the reporters who invaded the pitch when Tigre refused to return for the second half.

The match had already been marred by scuffles between the two sides in the first half triggered by a foul on Sao Paulo's Lucas Moura.

Chilean referee Enrique



According to Gonzaga, when the police arrived "there was general fighting between Sao Paulo security, the players and the Tigre staff. No one was armed, there were people

Osses officially called off the game when the Argentinian players refused to take to the pitch for the second half with Conmebol awarding the title to Sao Paulo.



ISTAMBUL (AFP): British Sophie Allen (C) competes in the women's 100m individual medley semifinal on December 13, 2012 during the FINA World Short Course Swimming Championships in Istanbul.

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NBA: Noah powers Bulls past Sixers

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) - Joakim Noah scored 21 points Wednesday, as the undermanned Chicago Bulls defeated the Philadelphia 76ers by a score of 96-89.

Luol Deng had 19 points and 12 rebounds for Chicago, who recorded their fourth win in five National Basketball Association games.

Marco Belinelli (16) and Nate Robinson (14) also reached double figures as Chicago outscored Philadelphia 17-9 over the final five minutes.



Philadelphia lost the second in the last three games, despite 26-points and nine-assists from Jrue Holiday and 16 points and eight rebounds from Evan Turner.

Thaddeus Young added 13 points and nine rebounds for the Sixers, who were done in by poor three-point and foul shooting. The 76ers went just two-of-14 from long distance and made just five of 11 free-throw attempts.

It was a quick turnaround for the Bulls who lost at home to the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday.

Chicago is without its starting backcourt of Derrick

Rose and Richard Hamilton, who suffered a foot injury and could be out up to two more weeks.

Former league MVP Rose is working out but has yet to start practicing with the team after undergoing major surgery on his left knee.

The Sixers have injury problems of their own. Center Andrew Bynum has yet to play a game this season because of problems in both knees.

The Bulls have now won four in a row against the Sixers, including another victory earlier in December.

Chelsea thrash Monterrey.... continued from page 16

Any hopes the Mexicans had for a second-half comeback were dashed after just 15 seconds of the restart, Fernando Torres grabbing a deflected goal from inside the box with much of the 36,648 crowd yet to return to their seats.

The match was over as a contest on the 48-minute-mark when Darwin Chavez put the ball into his own net to make it 3-0.

A rout appeared to be on the

cards at the 68,000-capacity International Stadium in Yokohama but Victor Vucetich's side steadied the ship and scored a consolation goal through De Nigris in injury time.

Chelsea will play Copa Libertadores winners Corinthians from Sao Paulo in the final in Yokohama on Sunday. Earlier that day Monterrey will take on Egypt's Al Ahly in a play-off for third place.

Baseball: Star slugger Hamilton leaves Texas for Angels



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Outfielder Josh Hamilton is joining fellow Major League Baseball star sluggers Albert Pujols and Mike Trout with the Los Angeles Angels, reportedly inking a five-year deal Thursday worth \$125 million. ESPN, Fox Sports, CBS and the major leagues' official website reported the deal as completed even as the club refused to confirm the move. The Angels signed a \$240 million free-agent deal with Pujols last year as well as landing C.J. Wilson, a former teammate of Hamilton at Texas as the Rangers won American League titles in 2010 and 2011 but each time lost in the World Series. Hamilton, 31, has hit .304 with 161 home runs and 553 runs batted in over 737 major league games. This past season, he batted .285 with a career-high 43 home runs and 128 runs batted in. In 2010, Hamilton took American league Most Valuable Player honors after hitting .359. The move came after the Angels signed starting pitchers Tommy Hanson and Joe Blanton and a pair of relief pitchers and boosted the club payroll to around \$165 million, about \$60 million shy of the city rival Dodgers.

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NBA: LeBron, Kobe lead while Lin trails in All-Star voting

NEW YORK (AFP) - LeBron James and Kobe Bryant top the first voting results for the 62nd NBA All-Star Game announced Thursday by the league while Asian-American guard Jeremy Lin trails in his bid for a spot.

The showdown of Eastern

and Western conference superstars will be staged February 17 at Houston.

Miami playmaker James, last season's NBA Most Valuable Player who led the Heat to last season's NBA crown, has the overall lead with 641,348 votes while Los An-

geles Lakers guard Bryant paces the Western Conference and ranks second overall at 639,419.

New York's Carmelo Anthony, with 573,112 votes, and Boston's Kevin Garnett, with 218,246 votes, joined James as Eastern Conference front-court leaders with Miami's Chris Bosh a distant fourth at 210,724.

Miami's Dwyane Wade led the East backcourt with 430,925 votes with Boston's Rajon Rondo in the other

guard spot at 382,613. Brooklyn's Deron Williams was a distant third at 211,426.

In the West, Bryant was joined among guards by Chris Paul of the Los Angeles Clippers at 353,603 with All-Star Game host Houston's two backcourt standouts, Lin and James Harden, next on the list.

Lin, who touched off "Linsanity" last season in coming off the bench and making an unexpected impact for the Knicks before signing with the Rockets in the off-season, was

third among guards at 298,319 with Harden at 196,108.

Western Conference front-court voting leaders included Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant at 605,965, Lakers' big man Dwight Howard at 434,168 and Blake Griffin of the Clippers at 307,855.

San Antonio's Tim Duncan was fourth at 189,577 with Spanish star Pau Gasol of the Lakers next at 139,868.

Voting ends January 14 and the NBA All-Star starters will be announced three days later.

Football: Chelsea thrash Monterrey, set up Corinthians final



YOKOHAMA (AFP) - European champions Chelsea outclassed Mexican side Monterrey 3-1 at the Club World Cup in Japan on Thursday to set up a mouthwatering final clash with Brazilian giants Corinthians.

The English Premier League club, debuting at the intercontinental tournament, dominated large spells of the first half and had the match sewn up shortly into the second -- scoring two goals within three minutes of the restart.

Monterrey were bidding to become the first CONCACAF champions to reach a Club World Cup final, but the strength of Chelsea's David Luiz in midfield, coupled with the trickery of Juan Mata and Eden Hazard proved too much for the Mexicans.

"It was a good game, high tempo, good play, great goals and great movement so lots of positives for us," interim Chelsea boss Rafael Benitez said.

Chelsea started the match

with the greater intent and Luiz went close to scoring inside the first four minutes, breaking from his unfamiliar defensive midfield position to fire narrowly over the bar from just outside the box.

Eden Hazard missed a golden opportunity to open the scoring two minutes later. Luiz played a precision pass which split the Monterrey defence but the Belgian pushed the ball wide with only the goalkeeper to beat.

Chelsea had their breakthrough on 17 minutes with a beautifully worked goal that was expertly finished by Mata.

Midfielder Oscar played a back heel to Ashley Cole on the edge of the penalty box. The left-back then squared it to the Spaniard who took a touch before smashing it past Monterrey goalkeeper Jonathan Orozco.

Monterrey's only clear-cut chance in the first 45 came shortly afterwards when striker Aldo De Nigris headed over the bar from close range.

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